

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-8 (canceled)

9. **(Currently amended)** In a fuel injection valve for internal combustion engines, with a housing (1) that contains a moving valve element (12) whose movement counter to the elastic force of a spring element (30) controls the fuel supply to the combustion chamber (6) of the engine, the improvement wherein the spring element (30) comprises a cylindrical sleeve having a longitudinal axis (14), openings (45) at a number of locations in the wall of the sleeve, the openings (45) being separate from one another to allow the spring element (30) to be elastically deformed in the direction of the longitudinal axis (14), **the openings comprise two continuous slot-shaped openings (45) disposed in a radial plane of the spring element (30), the two openings are separated from each other by a single first connecting piece (48) and a single second connecting piece (48') disposed opposite from the first connecting piece (48), and wherein the openings (45) have a longitudinal axis (52) in relation to which they are symmetrical and wherein the openings (45) have the form of a longitudinal slot that tapers in the middle in relation to this longitudinal axis (52).**

10. - 11. **(Canceled)**

12. **(Currently amended)** The fuel injection valve according to claim 9, ~~claim 11~~, wherein openings (45) are disposed in at least two radial planes, and wherein the openings of the one radial plane are rotated by 90° in relation to those in the adjacent radial plane.

13. **(Canceled)**

14. **(Currently amended)** The fuel injection valve according to claim 9, ~~claim 13~~, wherein the ends (47) of the openings (45) are rounded.

15. **(Canceled)**

16. **(Previously presented)** The fuel injection valve according to claim 9, wherein the spring element (30) is contained in the housing (1) in an elastically prestressed position.